



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Inspector General and Commissioner Announce Psychiatric Residency Programs for Rural Virginia

Richmond—Governor Gilmore's Inspector General for Mental Health Services, Anita S. Everett, M.D., has teamed up with Commissioner Richard E. Kellogg to establish an innovative way to encourage psychiatrists to work in rural areas of Virginia. Under a new state-funded program, the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services will contract with the University of Virginia, the Medical College of Virginia, and Eastern Virginia Medical School to recruit psychiatry residents who agree to work in an underserved area of the state. The program was a recommendation of the Governor's Commission on Community Services and In-Patient Care, which issued its final report in December 1999.

"This approach really solidifies our focus on improving treatment for people with mental illness in the community. If psychiatrists are available in the community, many more people can be treated and monitored without having to be hospitalized," said Dr. Everett. Commissioner Kellogg agreed, saying, "All of our current initiatives are focused on moving toward a community-based clinical model of services. This program provides communities with medical staff, and encourages psychiatrists to practice and live in areas where they are really needed."

As many as four residents from each university will be nominated by their programs. The residents will be paid a stipend for at least two years in exchange for their commitment to work as staff of a local mental health program or a state mental health facility after graduation. The program also provides partial salary support over three years to fund faculty mentors who will supervise and support the residents in their areas and work with the Inspector General and the Department on case consultation and research.

The residency program is funded with a \$500,000 allocation annually. In addition, the Department is allocating \$500,000 and \$1 million next year to community services boards to increase and improve community psychiatric services throughout the Commonwealth. This allocation will be combined with a \$350,000 federal grant to enhance these community services.

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